

VI. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Division of Parks and Recreation's approach to natural resource management is directed by the North Carolina Constitution and the State Parks Act, both of which require the prudent management of natural resources. The constitution sets the overall policy by broadly defining the conservation and protection of natural resources and the acquisition of such resources as a proper function of government. The State Parks Act states that unique archaeological, geological, biological, scenic and recreational resources are a part of the heritage of the people that *"...should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants."*

The North Carolina State Parks System plays an important role in maintaining, rehabilitating and perpetuating the state's natural heritage. The natural resources of the state parks system are: high quality, rare or representative examples of natural communities; native plants and animals; geological features and landforms; water resources; and the natural processes that affect these resources. The primary objective in natural resource management will be the protection of natural resources for their inherent integrity and for appropriate types of enjoyment while ensuring their availability for future generations.

It is the Division's policy that natural resources will be managed by allowing natural environments to evolve through natural processes with minimal human influence. Natural resource management will not attempt solely to preserve individual species or processes; rather, it will attempt to maintain all the components and processes of a park's naturally evolving ecosystems. When intervention is necessary, direct or secondary effects on park resources will be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Intervention of natural processes may occur:

1. To correct or compensate for the previous human disruption of natural processes;
2. To protect, restore or enhance rare species and natural communities;
3. To protect, restore or enhance significant archaeological resources;
4. To construct, maintain, improve or protect park facilities; and,
5. To prevent danger to human health or safety around park facilities.

All park facilities will be designed, constructed and maintained to avoid adverse impacts to high quality natural communities, rare plant and animal species, major archaeological sites and other significant natural and cultural resources.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Division of Parks and Recreation staff identifies natural and cultural resource management issues as a component of the general management plan process and groups them according to the categories shown below. Staff assigns a high, medium or low priority to each issue using the criteria described at the end of this section. The Division's Natural Resources Program is responsible for all actions unless otherwise noted.

Category	Subcategory	Project Description	Priority*
Animal Resource Management	Rare Species Management	Red-cockaded Woodpeckers are monitored by the Wildlife Resources Commission and should continue to be monitored.	Medium
Botanical Resource Management	Inventory Deficiencies	Natural community inventory is needed for the entire park.	Medium
		An updated rare species inventory is needed for the entire park.	Medium
	Rare Species Management	Monitor populations of new species identified in the rare species inventory.	Low
Cultural Resource Management	Cultural Resource Management	Develop a plan for Native American canoes in the lake.	Medium
Infrastructure Management	Environmental Compliance for Planned Construction Projects	An environmental review needs to be conducted for the proposed trail around Jones Lake.	High
	Road Management	Management of roads adjoining NC Forest Resource property needs to be examined.	Medium
	Trails Management	Current trail around Jones Lake is impassable. This trail needs to be re-routed.	High
	Septic/Wastewater Management	Remove septic tank from around ranger residence.	Medium
Land-Use Management	Buffer Zone to State Park Property	A 1,000 foot buffer zone around the park needs to be established to deter encroachment from hunting near visitor use areas.	Medium
	Fire Management	Current acres under prescription need to be burned on a consistent rotation.	High
	Park Boundaries	Complete survey boundary marking around Bushy Lake.	Medium
	Rights-of-Way	Road right-of-way issues with NC Forest Service should be documented.	High
Water Resource Management	Riparian Buffer Zone Protection	Logging activities near Ruskin Road (Salters Road) need to be monitored.	Medium
		New residence near New Salters should be monitored for sedimentation impacts.	Medium
	Water Pollution	Monitor roads and trails to ensure stream/lake bank integrity is maintained.	Medium
		A number of ditches along Highway 242 appear to carry sediment back into the park.	Medium

* Explanation of priority codes

High If the resource management activity is not undertaken in the near future there is a distinct possibility that natural resources will be compromised. These issues should be addressed within the next five years.

Medium Although there is a possibility that resources could be compromised, the priority is not as critical as the high priority projects.

Low Projects with low priority have significantly less chance for compromise of the natural resources if the project is not undertaken in a timely fashion or the project may depend on completion of other projects.

10/04